

HONORING THE EMPLOYEES OF THE HOMELAND SECURITY DE- PARTMENT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting day. Earlier today on the floor of the House, we rose to pay tribute to the 5-year anniversary of the Department of Homeland Security and to express our appreciation for the employees for their extraordinary efforts and contributions to protect and secure our Nation. Security protection is not perfect.

And there have been challenges and, if you will, mountains to climb in preparing this Nation for its own security. Having been on the early established Homeland Security Committee and having gone to Ground Zero as the smoke was simmering, I know full well the value and purpose of all of these front-line employees.

I offer them today my greatest appreciation and would say to all of them, I would wish that all of our jobs relating to security would be extinguished, but we know that it cannot, and our task is to protect Americans. For that, we must be diligent and transparent. We must value civil liberties, but as well, we must be sure on security.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that when we bring our troops home, we will have a civilian Homeland Security Department that can truly help secure America.

DO NOT PASS THE U.S.-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased as Speaker PELOSI decided to assert Congress' power over international trade by waiving ill-advised fast-track rules, and I hope the decision to waive the 90-day deadline for a vote on the Colombia FTA will effectively kill the agreement.

This is not a good idea at this time. Colombia has not proven that they are capable of providing the human rights that the people of Colombia so desperately need. Passage of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement would greatly diminish our Nation's reputation as a leader in the fight to end human rights abuses worldwide. Like the Peru agreement which preceded it, the Colombia FTA is based on the flawed NAFTA-CAFTA model which also led to the outsourcing of millions of high-paying American jobs. This comes at a time when our own country is in a recession and experiencing unprecedented job loss.

All around, this is not a good idea, and I hope that we will kill this.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DONNELLY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

BROKEN JUSTICE IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the justice system has broken down for Jamie Leigh Jones and other female contractors sexually assaulted in Iraq by their coworkers.

In June 2005, nearly 3 years ago, Jamie Leigh Jones was drugged and gang raped by her KBR coworkers in Iraq. After 2½ years and no real answers from our own government agencies, Jamie decided to go public in hopes of finding the answers and getting justice. She testified before the House Judiciary Committee in December of last year. And despite Jamie's experiences and the national attention that this issue garnered, nothing changed in Iraq. There continues to be a hostile living and working environment for female contractors that are Americans working overseas for American employers.

A "boys will be boys" atmosphere seems to appear where assaults occur, and then they're covered up. The Department of Justice says it has several active investigations, but it has not prosecuted any contractor for a sexual assault since the invasion of Iraq 5 years ago.

The Justice Department has over 200 employees in Baghdad. The question is, what are they doing? Why aren't they prosecuting crimes by Americans against Americans? There are 180,000 civilian workers in Iraq; not all of those people are good folks, some of them have committed crimes, but yet not one of them has been prosecuted for an assault that has occurred. These assailants remain free and unaccountable while the victims continue to suffer.

And yet there is more. This week we learned of another victim. She identified herself this morning at the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations as Dawn Lemon. Dawn Lemon's story is brutal. She went to Iraq as a KBR contractor. She was stationed in the hostile red zone as a paramedic. She awoke in January of 2008, just 3 months ago, to the sound of incoming rocket attacks. But when she woke up, she was naked in a chair, covered in blood and feces. She had feces in her mouth. She found a U.S. soldier lying naked in the bed next to her with his clothes and his gun on the floor. All she could remember was screaming at this unknown soldier that was laying on top of her. She sought help from a KBR

colleague, thinking that he would save her, but he didn't. As a soldier anally raped her, her KBR colleague forced her to perform oral sex on him. And when Dawn told her KBR supervisor about the incident, she was told to be quiet. When she reported the incident to the camp's military liaison, she was told again not to say anything.

In order to leave Iraq, Dawn had to cooperate with KBR. She had to sign documents agreeing not to discuss the rape in public. She decided to send those documents via e-mail to an attorney in the United States, but 20 minutes after she sent those documents Army investigators showed up and confiscated her computer. They were obviously tracking her e-mail communications.

Before she left Iraq on leave, she was assigned to sleep guarded by two Army Criminal Investigative Division officials to keep her safe. Her alleged assailants, however, were in the same camp, but they roamed freely, doing what they wished.

As the Federal Government agencies refuse to take responsibility and implement change and as these agencies have continued to pass the buck back and forth, still, nothing has occurred in these cases. There are no jurisdictional problems. The law exists to prosecute these individuals in Iraq, and these laws have been applicable for some time. There is nothing but excuses from our government agencies for failure to prosecute these criminals.

We knew in December that Jamie Leigh Jones was not alone. Three years later, this is still occurring. Dawn Lemon now joins a growing number of female contractors who have been sexually assaulted in Iraq by their coworkers.

Justice has failed these women. Is our government hiding these crimes? Why don't companies like KBR cooperate rather than stonewall these investigations?

Mr. Speaker, we will find the answers to these questions, I assure you. Victims like Jamie Leigh Jones and Dawn are to be admired for coming forward. Our duty is to protect them and their rights. We can do no less because, Mr. Speaker, justice is the one thing we should always find, even in Iraq.

And that's just the way it is.

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Public Health Week and to applaud the passage of legislation to address health issues that impact the quality of life of all Americans. I commend my colleagues for joining me in passing critical health care legislation to improve the lives of Americans, from the youngest to the oldest among us, by increasing their access to care.